

Panthera

by Amoralyn

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Summary: You've wanted to make friends with your neighbours, Kuroo Tetsurou and Kozume Kenma, for a long time, but you've never had the courage. However, a chance meeting on the train could change everything for all of you! Now the hunters' eyes are focused on you, and as their prey you have no hope of escape.

## 1. Introduction

\_pã;nthÄ"r â€" Predator of all animals\_

\_The black panther, \_\_\*\*Kuroo Tetsurou\*\*\_\_: dark and sleek and dangerous\_

><em>The jaguar, <em>\_\_\*\*Kozume Kenma\*\*\_\_: brilliant and beautiful and solitary \_

\_Before you realise it, they're already hunting you!\_

\_xxx\_

"!This is so annoying. Why won't it stay down?"

The tall man glares at his reflection in the train's window as he stubbornly tries to flatten his tall fringe of pitch black hair. He turns his attention to his companion, a young man with hair black on top and golden blonde on the bottom, but he was more interested in playing a game on his phone than his friend's hair problems.

"Oi, Kenma! Are you listening!?" The tall man sighs exasperatedly, as he looks back to the train window.

"!Not really, Kuroo." Kenma responds in a quiet, monotone voice, as he taps the buttons on his phone rapidly.

"Ngh!Why is it so hard to get rid of this stupid bed head?!" Kuroo

practically snarls at his reflection, pushing down on his hair roughly.

"UmAh" "I think your hair looks really nice"

A sudden voice startles both men, and they quickly look up to see a girl beside them. She meets Kuroo's eyes for a second before quickly staring at the floor, and then shyly looks at them from the corner of her eyes. Around them, people start to move towards the doors of the train, as it slowly grinds to a halt.

Kuroo is surprised for a moment, before he grins brightly. The girl's face turns bright red and, before Kuroo can even open his mouth to thank her, she turns and runs off the train.

Kuroo stares at the slowly closing train door in surprise. Just as the train starts to move again he turns back to his friend, who is already back to playing his game.

"Hey Kenma do you know that girl?"

"No." Kenma replies, not looking up from his game. "But she lives a few doors down from our apartment and she goes to our university too she's in some of my classes"

"So she's a first year too huh? Weird I don't think I've ever really seen her before" Kuroo murmurs, running a hand through his hair (only for it to spring back immediately, to his annoyance).

"I think she's tried to talk to us before But she's very shy, so she can't" Kenma mutters, holding his phone tightly as he tilts his head slightly away from Kuroo. "I see her playing games sometimes" Kenma whispers, so softly it's almost impossible to hear.

"Hmm well, we'll have to talk to her next time. She seems like an interesting girl." Kuroo grins at Kenma, patting his shoulder good naturedly. Kenma makes an annoyed snort, and twists his body away from his friend. Kuroo laughs, before stopping suddenly, as if something had just occurred to him.

"Hey, you said she went to our university, right?" Kuroo turns his attention to the large train map near them.

"Yeah." Kenma mutters, still not looking up.

"Well, I hope we didn't cause too much trouble for her" Kuroo suddenly chuckles. "scaring her off two stops before the one for the university."

"You're the scary one" Kenma mutters, causing Kuroo to smirk again.

## 2. The Aftermath

You take a long, deep breath as you step off the train. It's the end of the day, the sun is just beginning to set, and you're exhausted.

At first, you were sure this was going to be a good day. You'd gotten all your assignments finished, you'd had a delicious, healthy breakfast you got up early to make yourself, and despite running a little late cleaning up you'd gotten on the train just before it took off.

Yes, you'd definitely started the day brimming with positive energy!

And then you'd found yourself almost right next to the two young men who lived just two doors down from you—the ones you saw all the time but had never been able to work up the courage to talk to.

Since you'd started university, you'd had a really tough time making friends. All of your high school friends had gone to other universities, and you had a hard time talking to new people in your own. Now, while everyone else laughed with their friends, you spent your days studying and playing video games by yourself.

And you were really, really lonely.

And then one day, while you were unlocking your apartment, you suddenly heard the music from the game you had been playing all week ring out through the hallway. You stopped, patting your pockets to see if you had somehow dropped your game system and it had fallen open, but it was still safely in your jacket pocket. You were confused, until you heard voices nearby.

When you looked up, you saw the two men unlocking their own apartment. The one unlocking the door, tall and well-built, was scolding the other one—a boy with black and blonde hair whose face was buried in his game system, playing the game.

Your heart started to beat faster, and you slowly opened your mouth to say that, hey, you liked that game too, and maybe you could play together sometime? But you soon closed it as you realised how silly that would sound out loud. They would think you were nuts, or creepy, or both. Dejected, you were about to turn back to the door—when the one playing the game suddenly looked up and locked eyes with you.

You had just enough time to marvel at how beautiful his eyes were. Incredibly bright and intelligent, they seemed to stare right through you. For some reason, they reminded you of a predatory cat.

Then, the tall one opened the door and stepped in, calling the other one to hurry in as well.

The boy playing the game turned his attention to his friend for a moment, and you immediately took the opportunity to step into your own apartment, quickly shutting the door behind you.

You'd slid to the floor and hugged your knees to your chest. You squeezed your eyes shut as you felt your heart beat hard and fast against your chest, while your stomach twisted unpleasantly.

After that, you wondered if you'd ever be able to talk to them—

But now, right now, they were right next to you. It was the perfect opportunity to talk to them. To start a friendly, stress free conversation with your neighbours. Kuroo and Kenma, as you heard them call each other, went to your university, and since you were close on the train you'd probably be getting off together. At that point, all you had to do is ask if they went to your university too, maybe find out if they were in your year and shared some classesâ€¦you could do it, you could talk to them. Maybe you could even make friends with them.

But then you heard the tall, handsome Kuroo complaining about his hair, something you could sort of relate to, and you wanted to say something nice. After all, his hair was interesting, and it made him stand out. It was unique, and you liked it. So before you could stop yourselfâ€¦you said that. Out loud.

And then he turned his sharp eyes on you, and you immediately felt your heart stop beating. Calculating and predatory, his eyes reminded you of a large cat as well.

You tried to look down, pretend you weren't the one who said it, but you hadn't been able to stop yourself from looking back up. And then he smiled at you and you felt your heart beat go into overdrive, and you were sure they were going to be able to hear it, and now Kenma's golden eyes were on you as well soâ€¦

So you ran off the train.

And that was how you found yourself having to run to your university from where you'd gotten off too early. You were lucky to just barely make it in time for class.

Then you'd spent the entire day terrified you'd see Kuroo and Kenma again. You were positive they'd burst into laughter the minute they saw you after the ridiculous way you acted this morning. Or worse, they'd just look at you awkwardly and then turn away, never wanting to talk with the weird girl who rode the train with them ever again.

Luckily, by spending much of the day hiding in the library, you hadn't seen them at all, even when you'd gotten on the train to go home. You could relaxâ€¦at least until the next morning. And the next day. Wonderful.

You sigh loudly as you start to walk home, your bag gently hitting your side as you stare down at the ground. Well, at least you could give up on trying to make friends with them. It was definitely impossible now.

You look up suddenly, a familiar store catching your eye. A small, brightly painted grocery store, it was close to your apartment complex so you'd been shopping at it frequently. They were a little expensive, but the old man in charge was always very kind to you. He'd say things like 'Shop longer! If people see a pretty lady like you shopping here, they'll come in to!' and smile brightly at you, and it never failed to make you laugh. Sometimes he even offered you incredible deals on fresh ingredients he needed to get rid of.

You step into the store, and an hour later you're walking out several

bags of groceries hanging from your arms. It was nearly closing time, and the store owner was receiving a large order of mackerel pike in the morning. Wanting to get rid of his old stock, he had given you an amazing deal on all the fish still in the store. After you picked up some fruits and vegetables, you were finally ready to head home. A good thing too, because it was rapidly getting very dark.

You run to your apartment complex as fast as you can, and you quickly head up to your apartment. You take a deep breath of relief as you finally step in front of your apartment door.

Then you remember you have to unlock the door, the key is in your purse, and your arms are currently laden with groceries. You make a strangled moan of frustration and awkwardly try to grab your purse while you shuffle the bags around, letting all the ones on your right arm drop into your hand.

Just then, you feel those bags lifted from your hand.

Blinking in surprise you look up and feel you heard stop for the second time that day.

"Having some trouble?" Kuroo grins roguishly, hefting your groceries, which he now holds in both hands.

You're stunned into silence, struggling to think of something to say, when you feel the bags on your other arm also lifted, and you turn to see Kenma on the other side of you. He stares at the floor, uncertain eyes darting up at you occasionally, as he holds the rest of your groceries in his hands.

You're stunned with surprise, and for a few moments you can't think of a thing to say. Then you slowly nod.

"Yeah thank you." You say softly, as you finally find your key and unlock your door.

"You're welcome. You need us to help you carry this stuff inside?" Kuroo says pleasantly. Kenma looks at him sharply, but stays silent.

"Oh! Thank you so much, but that's not necessary." You stammer hastily, as you hold your hands out to take back the groceries.

"Well, if that's what you'd prefer." Kuroo says, looking a bit disappointed. He doesn't press you though, and he and Kenma put the many bags back into your hands.

You smile nervously, still not able to look either of them in the eye for longer than a second, and for a few moments there's nothing but a deep awkward silence.

"Well, we won't keep you anymore. Oh, sorry. I never asked for your name. What is it?" Kuroo asks politely. Kenma is beginning to squirm next to him, but Kuroo completely ignores him.

"It's (l/n). Oh, but you can call me (f/n) if you prefer." You reply shyly.

"What a beautiful name, (f/n)~ My name is Kuroo Tetsurou, and this is Kozume Kenma." He pauses to pat his friend's shoulder, earning Kuroo an annoyed glare which he also ignores.

"Iâ€"It's nice to meet you Kuroo-san, Kozume-san." You say, bowing your head respectfully.

"â€|Kenma." A quiet voice speaks up suddenly. "Just call me Kenma." The young man looks up at Kuroo. "Those bags are heavy. We're keeping her from putting them down in her apartment."

"Ah, you're right Kenma. Sorry, (f/n). We'll let you go." Kuroo gives you a small wave as he and Kenma turn to walk back to their own apartment. "Let's talk again~"

Your cheeks turn red when you see his eyes sparkling mischeiviously as he smirks, while Kenma watches you from the corner of his eyes. He gives you a small, slow wave as well as he follows Kuroo to their door.

"Umâ€|Uhâ€|Wait!" You call out suddenly. You take a deep breath and start talking before you're too nervous to stop yourself. "Dâ€"Do you like fâ€"fish? Iâ€"I mean, like mackerel pike?"

Kuroo and Kenma stop and turn back, staring at you in surprise, before Kuroo smiles gently.

"Mm! Iâ€"We do." Kuroo grins. Kenma pouts irately, but when his attention turns back to you he nods slowly.

"Well, I have a bunch of mackerel pike from this store andâ€"and Iâ€"I would be happy to share some with you. Wâ€"Would you like to have dinner with me?"

A few moments of silence as the two boys stare at you in disbelief. Then, Kuroo bursts into laughter, before he walks back to you, Kenma walking at his side.

"Yeah, that sounds fun. Right, Kenma?" Kuroo chuckles as he nudges his shorter friend, who's once again staring at you.

"â€|I guess." Kenma murmurs, before his eyes slowly turn away from you. You can't help but think you see a small smile on his face.

You smile gratefully, and the three of you step inside your apartment.

### 3. Something's Beginning

"Mmm~ That was so good. (F/n) is a pretty great cook right? Although I had to help her a little grilling the fish." Kuroo yawns loudly as he flops down on their couch, stretching out his muscular limbs.

"â€|It was fine." Kenma mutters as he locks the door behind him. "She'sâ€|nice."

"Aw c'mon Kenma, be honest. You like her, don't you?" Kuroo says, tossing his head over the arm of the couch and staring at Kenma

upside down. Kenma notes how it makes Kuroo's smug grin look like a deep frown.

"â€¦I guess." Kenma shrugs indifferently, turning away from Kuroo to grab his game system. "I don't dislike her."

"â€¦I see." Kuroo smirks, as he sits up, and pulls out his phone. "Well, if that's all, I'll text her to forget about the 'sitting next to Kenma when you guys share classes' thing..."

In a swift motion, Kuroo quickly pulls the phone away, high over his head. In the space where it had been a second before, Kenma's hands grasps at empty air. Kuroo chuckles as Kenma glares at him irately.

"â€¦That's not necessary." Kenma mutters, pulling his hands back. He pointedly looks away from Kuroo, avoiding his smug, self-satisfied expression, before stepping past him to sit down on the couch as well.

"She was really happy when you told her to sit next to me in the classes we share." Kenma says softly, as he fiddles with his game system. It was the same type as you had. "I thinkâ€¦if you tell her not to, she'll be really sad."

"Hmm? Is that so?" Kuroo grins, and starts typing something on his phone. "Then I'll tell her to spend lunch with us too. That should make her very happy~"

"â€¦I don't need your help..." Kenma's voice is unexpectedly sharp, and Kuroo stops his typing to look down at him. Kenma is staring down at his game, but it's clear he isn't playing it. His lips are pressed tightly together, and he's clearly annoyed.

"I don't need your help getting friends." Kenma declares, looking up suddenly. Now, he stares straight into Kuroo's eyes. Kuroo's expression is almost completely unreadable, as he matches Kenma's angry glare with blank eyes.

"â€¦What about a girlfriend?" He says in a deadpan voice. The side of his lip twitches, and Kenma knows Kuroo's trying to suppress a grin.

"Kurooâ€¦" Kenma starts, his eyes narrowing, before Kuroo interrupts him.

"Yeah yeah, I know." Kuroo sighs loudly, dropping his head onto his hand. He runs his hand through his hair restlessly. "I'm not going to interfere. I'll let you do this your own way. You two have a lot in common, so there shouldn't be any trouble anyways."

Kenma's quiet for a few moments, watching Kuroo closely. There's something else. Something else Kuroo wants to say. Kenma waits patiently, and after a few moments of silence Kuroo speaks up again.

"â€¦I wasn't doing it just for you, you know." Kuroo mutters, his free hand gently tossing his phone in the air and catching it. Kenma catches him doing that a lot when he was really thinking deeply.

"Yes. I noticed you said 'lunch with us'." Kenma says dryly. "You want to be close to her too."

Kuroo laughs. "Well, yeah. She's cute enough when you see her, but with that shy girl personality she's really adorable. It makes me want to tease her~" He grins.

Kenma rolls his eyes. His expression is less angry though, so it doesn't come off as harsh. "â€|You want to tease everybody." Kenma points out.

"Guilty~" Kuroo chuckles. Then, his expression suddenly turns sombre, startling even Kenma. "But I wasn't talking about me when I said I wasn't doing it just for you. I was doing it for her too."

Kenma blinks in surprise, tilting his head curiously.

"You saw for yourself how happy she was just to be asked to sit next to you in class. And I'm pretty sure I've never seen anyone going into her apartmentâ€|not to mention that all the pictures she has with friends were all obviously taken when she was in high school." Kuroo pauses. He looks down at his phone, where Kenma can see the message Kuroo was writing her.

"â€|She's lonely." Kenma says quietly. Kuroo nods, as he starts typing on his phone again.

"I don't think you need help making friendsâ€|but I think she does." Kuroo finishes, as he hits a button to send his text.

Kenma is silent for a few moments, sitting back on the couch, tilting his head back, and staring up at the ceiling. He had thought something was odd about his neighbour's behaviour, but he thought it was just her personality. As in, her personality was weird.

"â€|You're unexpectedly sharp sometimes, Kuroo." Kenma murmurs. The side of his mouth twitches upwards in a small smile.

"Nah. You'd have figured it out too butâ€|hey, it's expected that a guy who's never had a girlfriend before wouldn't get girls all that well." Kuroo says in a mock kind tone, smirking.

"Ah? Soâ€|even a guy who's only had one girlfriend, who broke up with him when he tried to meet her parents with 'bad boy hair', is better at understanding themâ€|" Kenma closes his eyes, appearing as if he's thinking deeply. His tone is so serious it almost makes Kuroo forget he's being made fun of.

"â€|Fair enough." Kuroo laughs, running a hand through said 'bad boy hair' and once again failing to keep it down. "I still can't believe she thought I styled my hair like this on purpose."

"â€|Her parents wouldn't have liked you anyways, so she would have broken up with you anyhow." Kenma replies, giving a small shrug. "At least her doing it beforehand meant you avoided an awkward dinner."

Kuroo stares at Kenma for a few moments, his eyes wide with shock.



Then he bursts out into laughter, so strong he needs to hold his stomach. Sometimes Kenma was so blunt that Kuroo couldn't help but find it funny. It was also refreshing too, having someone who spoke so honestly. Kenma's method of comforting people was unusual, but it was strangely effective.

Kenma starts playing his game again, as he waits for Kuroo to calm down. He taps buttons quickly, as he finally hears Kuroo's laughter dissipate.

"Shit, I'm thirsty now. I need a drink" Kuroo stands up, and stretches his tall, muscular body. "I'm gonna grab a beer. You want one Kenma?"

Kenma stops playing the game, turning his attention away from it completely, to give Kuroo a look of absolute disgust.

He'd tried a beer once, at Kuroo's 'insistence' (really, nagging) and had been so revolted he swore never to drink it again. How Kuroo could drink one of them recreationally was something Kenma would never understand.

"Suit yourself!" Kuroo chuckles, as he walks off to the kitchen area.

Kenma wastes no time, and quickly goes back to his game. He's completely focused, only pausing it when Kuroo drops his large body back on the couch and consequently jostles Kenma. Kuroo sighs contentedly, lying back as he takes a long swig of his beer.

They sit in silence for a few moments, just enjoying the kind of comfortable silence, before Kenma suddenly speaks up.

"â€|I'm surprised you noticed so much about (f/n). You must have been watching her really closely." Kenma says quietly. It's his way of complimenting Kuroo, truly praising his perceptiveness, and Kuroo knows this. Still, he can't help how he responds.

"Of course I was watching her closely." Kuroo says cheerfully, which contrasts strongly with the lascivious smirk on his face. "Some parts closer than others though~"

"â€|Kuroo, I think you're the one who needs help making friends." Kenma sighs, shaking his head as Kuroo sticks his tongue out at him.

#### 4. Alone Time Part One - Class with Kenma

"Ah! Kenma!" You cry out, throwing your hand into the air and waving excitedly. You see his beautiful golden eyes fix on you, before he slowly walks in your direction.

"I told you not to call out like thatâ€|" He frowns as he sits down in the seat right beside yours.

"Sorry, but it's the only way to get your attention when you're playing on your phone." You respond sheepishly (and a little teasingly). Kenma pouts, and you can't help but laugh. He just looks so cute whenever he does thatâ€|like an annoyed cat just woken up

from its nap.

In fact, all of his expressions made you want to smile. At first, you'd thought his face was blank most of the timeâ€|an unwavering poker face.

But as you got to know him, you began to see the subtle ways his face would change. How his eyes would widen or his eyebrows would move or his nose would twitchâ€|you found it really interesting just how expressive that poker face could be.

Kenma sighs, bringing you out of your thoughts, and starts pulling his books out, now focused on getting ready for class. You smile happily, and follow suit.

Before you two started sitting together, Kenma used to sit in the very back of the class. He tried to sit as far away from everyone else as possible, and spent his time in class half paying attention, half playing on his phone.

You weren't much better. You used to sit right in the very front, paying close attention while trying to ignore the ache in your chest as you heard the people around you chatting happily amongst each other.

While you sat in silence. Completely alone in a room full of people.

So when Kuroo cheerfully suggested the two of you sit together, he'd decided you and Kenma should compromise by sitting in the middle. You had agreed happily, and Kenma hadâ€|well, he'd agreed, and without any major coaxing. From Kuroo's surprised expression, it seemed like that was a victory in itself.

The seats in the middle filled up fast though, so whoever arrived first, either you or Kenma, would save a seat for the other. You liked to get Kenma's attention by waving and calling his name, while he preferred the more subdued route of getting yours by sending you a text.

"So, did you manage to get past that level on Insane mode?" You ask him curiously. You have time to talk as you wait for class to start. Students are still slowly filing in and the professor hasn't arrived yet, so it'll be a little while yet.

Kenma slowly nods in response, looking straight ahead at the front. Occasionally, his eyes dart up to look into yours, before they quickly look away again.

Kenma's not really a talkative person, but it doesn't bother you at all. It makes the few words he does speak that much more special and meaningful. Plus, he's also a very good listenerâ€|even when you think he's distracted by a phone or a game, his responses tell you that he listens to every word you say.

"Wow, that's great Kenma! You're so skilledâ€|I'm still stuck on the same level on Hard mode." You laugh, resting your head on your hands. "Well, I got really close last timeâ€|I'd nearly defeated all the enemies, but then the last one got a criticalâ€|"

"All the enemies?" Kenma looks up at you now. His expression is as subdued as always, but you notice his eyes are lighting up with excitement. He really does love talking about games. "You only have to defeat the boss if you go past the soldiers in the front and go up the side of the field, you only end up fighting half of them!"

"Really?! Ah, so that's how you're supposed to do it! alright! I'll try that next time. Thanks Kenma!" You smile brightly. "I'm so lucky to know someone like you. You're so smart!"

Kenma immediately looks away from you, but you can see his cheeks turning a little red.

"Ah! sorry." You rubbed the back of your neck shyly. You really hadn't meant to embarrass him.

You've known Kenma (as in personally, not just as 'the boy with golden eyes who plays games') for only a few weeks, and he'd always get self-conscious when you complimented him. He'd get mad and say things like "(F/n), don't say stuff like that. It's embarrassing.", and you'd apologise immediately. He'd sigh and mutter under his breath, but he never held a grudge against you.

Still, you used to feel guilty after. You felt bad that you might have made your friend uncomfortable. You meant well, and you really liked Kenma, but you never wanted to upset him.

So you used to get really distressed whenever this happened. That was, until one day, when you complimented Kenma before you even realised (you were so amazed at what a colourful bento he had made and you just blurted it out). You must have looked pretty down when Kenma got upset.

But this time, Kuroo was there, and he'd laughed and told you not to worry about it. Then he leaned in close to you, and whispered in your ear that what really embarrassed Kenma was how happy your praise made him. Then he suddenly pulled away from you and you ended up wishing you'd done the same, because the piece of fish that Kenma had aimed at Kuroo ended up hitting your face instead. You'd never heard Kuroo laugh so hard, or Kenma talk so loudly (shouting 'Sorry!' and then flushing a bright red), then when that fish was slowly sliding down your face. You'd ended up laughing yourself, as you ate the fish and then praised Kenma on how well he prepared it (which made him flush even more).

Then Kuroo told you it was because he had supervised. Without him, Kenma would have put the fish between two slices of bread and called it a day.

This time the piece of fish Kenma threw hit its intended target straight on. It landed right between Kuroo's eyes, still tearing up with laughter.

It was just one of the many great moments you'd spent with Kenma and Kuroo over the last few weeks.

"Hey! Kuroo doesn't have a class until this afternoon right? After this one, we should all have lunch together!" You suggested cheerfully.

"We have a meeting with the volleyball team after this class" Kenma mutters. He looks a bit put-out"this doesn't surprise you, because you know he finds these meetings kind of a hassle.

"Oh, okay! Well, I guess I'll see you on the train then"if I get any good deals at the store, I'll invite you guys over for dinner." You say, trying to smile a bit brighter than usual. You'd never admit it, because you thought it was embarrassing and, frankly, pathetic, but you were always sad when you spent lunches alone, without Kenma or Kuroo. You made sure they didn't know though, because the last thing you wanted was them hanging out with you because they felt sorry for you, or guilty.

It was difficult though, extremely difficult, to hide things from Kenma. He was incredibly intelligent and unbelievably perceptive, and he could always tell when something upset you. He wasn't much for comforting words, but"he always tried in his own way to make you feel better. And sometimes, all you needed was the knowledge that someone was trying.

"The meeting shouldn't last long." Kenma says quietly. He's looking down at the front again, where the professor is starting to set up now, but he's watching you closely from the corner of his eyes. The intensity of his gaze makes a shiver run down your spine. "We can meet up afterwards."

"Alright. But don't rush on my account, okay?" You reply, a bit anxious. You really don't want to be a burden on them"although even as you're thinking that, Kenma shoots you a look that says 'I want that meeting done as fast as possible, if I'm rushing on anyone's account it's mine'. You have to stifle your laughter, which makes Kenma smile a little.

He really did comfort you in his own way.

Just then, a loud voice rings through the room. It's your professor, meaning class is starting. Quickly, you start taking notes.

"Apples"

Kenma's soft whisper makes you look up suddenly. You look at him quizzically, tilting your head slightly. Did you mishear him?

"Get apples at the store. If you can. For dinner." Kenma continues quietly. "Apple pie"is my favourite."

You blink in surprise, and then beam happily.

"Sure thing, Kenma!"

## 5. Alone Time Part Two - Dining with Kuro

"Ugh"that meeting was too long" Kenma mutters indignantly, glaring at his sandwich in his hands as if it's the reason he's eating so late.

"It was barely half an hour Kenma." Kuroo chides him affectionately. Kenma pouts, looking away, and you try not to make it obvious how cute you think it makes him look.

Kuroo then catches your attention, covering his mouth as he yawns loudly, and then leaning back so his back is resting on the side of your arm.

"You say that, but it looks like it tired you out a little too, right Kuroo?" You say pleasantly, trying to ignore the way your heart speeds up at the feeling of his large body against you. He's warm, and you can feel his large muscles through both of your clothes.

"Nah, that's because I was up late doing homework." Kuroo laughs, stretching his limbs out and pushing his body further against yours. You stuck your tongue out at him as you lean back against him to avoid falling over, and you hear him chuckle in response.

"Homework? Is that what you call doing \_that\_?" Kenma mumbles something under his breath, and you barely catch it. You have no idea what he means, but you see Kuroo shoot him a glare, so it must be something interesting.

However just when you're about to ask, Kuroo tips his head back so it's against yours. You have to raise your hand to push his bedhead hair out of your face, and you can tell he's grinning.

"Hey kitten, can I have some of your lunch? I forgot mine!" Kuroo gives a long, exaggerated sigh. You feel your face starting to heat up. You can feel his back muscles flex against you. You desperately hope he can't feel how hot your body feels too.

You're very thankful that Kenma always wants to eat outside, where there are very few people.

You have to remind yourself, very loudly in your head, that Kuroo was just a friendly, affectionate person. This doesn't mean anything and you certainly should not get your hopes up. He was just playing! he wasn't being serious.

"You didn't forget, you overslept." Kenma says bluntly. "And you wouldn't have if you hadn't stayed up!"

"Hey Kenma, you didn't have a lot of time to make lunch either, huh? Why don't you ask for some lunch too?" Kuroo interrupts him so smoothly you could almost believe he wasn't trying to hide something. He was lucky the scent of his cologne (or maybe his natural scent! no that was not a good train of thought to go down at all) was so dizzyingly good that you couldn't think straight enough to figure out what he didn't want you to know.

Kenma stares at Kuroo for a moment, considering carefully, and then looks down to the sandwich in his hands. Now that you're looking at it too, and closely, you're a bit confused.

"Kenma, what's in that?" You ask curiously. You already have a bad feeling about this, so you start to pull out another container of food from your bag. You'd started bringing extra food for them, since

they had morning practices a lot and would get extra hungryâ€|and to be honest, you liked seeing their faces light up whenever they ate your food.

Although considering their usual diets, they'd get excited over anything that had real meat and actual vegetables in it.

"Mustardâ€|and cheeseâ€|" Kenma mutters, looking at the sandwich with a displeased expression on his face.

"We have cheese?" Kuroo says, his head flying up suddenly in surprise. "Waitâ€|it's notâ€|not the one that was half mold?!"

"â€|I cut it offâ€|" Kenma replies, looking at Kuroo with a slightly offended expression.

"â€|Here, Kenma." You hand him the container of food, trying not to laugh. "There should be enough for you and Kuroo bothâ€|I wanted to use up the last of my rice, so I made extra."

"â€|Thanks." Kenma says, giving you a small smile as he accepts the container. He looks a bit excited tooâ€|poor Kenma probably wasn't looking forward to his mustard and mold cheese sandwich.

Kenma looks down at the sandwich again, and his displeased expression returns. "â€|Be right backâ€|" He mutters. He puts the container down on the ground in front of him and gets up to throw his sandwich away.

Meanwhile Kuroo kneads his body against yours, clearly getting comfortable against you.

"Are you going to be able to share with Kenma all the way over here?" You laugh, pushing against Kuroo lightly. Of course since he's extremely well built he barely ends up moving at all.

"Hmm? Didn't I already say I wanted to have yours?" Kuroo turns his head slightly, and you can see he's grinning. You quickly look down to the container in your hands, trying not to think about how close his face was to yours, and you note how it's less than half the size of the container you gave Kenma.

"Kuroo, sometimes I can't tell when you're playing with me or being seriousâ€|" You laugh, hoping it doesn't sound as awkward as you feel. Kuroo chuckles, and in a smooth motion he pulls his head off of you, twists his body and throws his arm around your neck. He finishes it off by resting his chin on your shoulder.

"That's what I like about you, kitten." He murmurs softly into your ear. "You're really fun to teaseâ€|and you blush so easily."

He grins, and you can feel yourself quickly proving him right as your cheeks turn bright red. Was his voice always that husky, or was it just your imagination?! You let out a stream of curse words in your head as you struggle to keep calm.

"Râ€|Really? I wâ€|was so sure it was all the fâ€|free foodâ€|" You stammer, trying to sound playful (and failing miserably), as you pick up a deviled egg from your lunch container and hold it up for him to

eat. Of course he doesn't take it from you, and just eats it right from your hand.

At least this time he didn't nibble at your fingers.

Although you'd only known Kuroo for a little while, he had quickly made it apparent that he liked being close to you, he liked touching you, and he'd do so happily as much as you'd allow him. You'd had friends like that in high school, very friendly and affectionate, and you were certain that he acted the same to his other friends. You were also certain that the times you felt a predatory aura from him was just your imagination (which tended to go into overdrive around Kuroo, unfortunately).

You liked being close to people as well, and after being alone for so long you really enjoyed the contact. Still, while being so close to him made you happyâ€¦sometimes you worried that you felt a little \_too\_ happy. Sometimes, you were too aware of just what a handsome guy Kuroo wasâ€¦and how good his touch felt against your skin.

Sometimes you were scared you were going to ruin everything.

And then Kuroo would say something and make you laugh, really laugh, from the bottom of your heart.

And all your worries would disappear.

Still, sometimes he got a little \_too\_ playful.

It had been several days ago, but the memory of it was still enough to make your heart beat faster. You'd all been here, in this same spot, eating lunch as usual, and you had been holding up a slice of apple from your lunch for him. He had leaned forward, taking it from your fingers with his mouthâ€¦and nipped you.

His teeth on your fingers had set your heart into overdrive and practically set your face on fire. You didn't even need to say anything, as Kuroo immediately started apologising and promised not to do it again. Although he may have gotten the hint from how hard Kenma had been glaring at him.

"The food is just one of many other things I like about you." He says sweetly, bringing your thoughts back to the present. "Although it's hardly free. We pay you back with game tips and this rocking hair style."

He points to his bedhead, with the cheesiest, most self-satisfied smirk you've ever seen on him, and you laugh so hard you would have fallen back onto the ground if not for his arm still holding you close to him.

"Ughâ€¦I'm going to start crying into the foodâ€¦" You say after at least a minute of straight laughter, still giggling as you wipe your eyes with the back of your hand.

You turn to look at him, and you see Kuroo is smiling now. His expression is unusually soft. You turn awayâ€¦something about his gaze is making your stomach feel light.

"I thought about you last night" His voice surprises you, making you jump slightly. He whispers so quietly, if his lips weren't so close to your ear you'd never have been able to hear it.

"Hmm? You did?" You ask curiously.

You feel Kuroo's body suddenly stiffen, and he laughs uncomfortably as he pulls back from you. He withdraws his arm as well, now leaving about half a foot between the two of you.

"Oh you know sometimes people just pop into your head!" Kuroo laughs nervously, rubbing the back of his neck the same way. "I guess I was probably hungry we haven't had dinner together in a while."

Well, you didn't have to be Kenma to know Kuroo was very obviously hiding something from you. Something he was pretty embarrassed about. Well, you'd throw him a bone and pretend you didn't notice. You knew he had done the same for you many times in the past few weeks.

"Oh, you're right! Well, I'm passing by the store after school, so you guys are invited to dinner tonight. I already talked to Kenma about it, and I promised get some apples to make him an apple pie. I'll try to get some fish too, if you want." You say cheerfully.

"That'd be great." Kuroo smiles softly, obviously relieved. "You're going home the same time as usual right? Let's all go together. Kenma and I will pay this time."

"Ah? That's not necessary"

"I insist." Kuroo's voice is soft, but firm. It's the same commanding and authoritative tone you've heard him use occasionally with his teammates. It's almost gentle, yet with an absolute confidence that forbids any defiance whatsoever. When you hear it, the image of a panther always appears in your mind.

It sends a pleasant shiver down your spine.

"Thanks, Kuroo." You reply shyly. You feel there's more you should say, so much more you should thank him for, but already it feels like butterflies are flitting about in your stomach.

As it always does on the very rare occasion he uses that voice on you.

"You're welcome." Kuroo smiles sweetly. He's quiet for a few moments, and then coughs nervously.

"Um speaking of Kenma can you not tell him what I told you before? It's uh" Kuroo looked like he was struggling to come up with words as well, so you decided to throw him another bone.

"Don't worry about it, Kuroo." You make a motion of zipping your lips and wink at him. You see him let out a sigh of relief, and he looks at back at you appreciatively. You smile, before something occurs to you, and your expression turns concerned. "Hey Just where is Kenma anyways?!"



As if calling his name summons him, Kenma suddenly comes into sight. He quickly jogs back to the two of you, looking quite unhappy.

"Kenma! What happened?!" You ask, looking him over worriedly. Kenma sits down next to you and Kuroo before he sighs loudly.

"One of my professors stopped me to congratulate me on my essay" Kenma mutters, looking cross as he hugs his knees to his chest. "He was praising me really loudly"

Kenma looks really upset, and you know this isn't the time to praise him yourself, even though you know he put a lot of effort into that essay and you were very happy to hear he'd done so well on it. Instead, you offer what you hope is a comforting smile and hand him the large container of food again.

"You sound stressed I bet you're really hungry by now, right?" You say gently. "Have some lunch. I'm sure you'll feel better."

Kenma looks at you unsurely, like he's not quite sure about your words, before he returns your smile with a small one of his own. He pulls his knees down so he's now sitting cross legged, and he takes the food from you gratefully.

"Oi! Leave some for me." Kuroo says, as he quickly moves to Kenma's side.

Obviously very hungry, the boys quickly open the container and go to work on the food, grabbing and arguing over various pieces of food.

You laugh cheerfully, completely forgetting your own lunch as you enjoy watching them.

## 6. Afterschool Special " Part One

Author's Note: Thank you to everyone on Tumblr who sent in suggestions to include for this chapter! It got so long I had to split it into two parts, so if you don't see your suggestion here it will be in the next part~

"

"Keeenmaaa!" Kuroo's voice echoes loudly in the large open space of their empty fridge.

Kenma's eyes dart up from his game, immediately noticing Kuroo's hair sticking up above the opened door of the fridge. Kenma hears him opening some drawers in the fridge before Kuroo's head pops up over the top and he looks down at Kenma in alarm.

"What happened to the leftovers (f/n) gave us yesterday?" Kuroo asks, looking surprised.

"We ate it for lunch today remember?" Kenma replies blankly, tilting his head slightly as he tried to sneak his gaze back to his game.

"All of it?!" Kuroo cries out, looking at Kenma in dismay before he quickly starts rummaging through the fridge again.

"â€|Yes." Kenma says curtly, his attention now completely returning to his game. It's clear this isn't the first time they've had this conversation. In fact, Kenma's annoyed expression suggests he knew this conversation would be coming when he saw Kuroo polish off the last of the leftovers at lunch.

"Well what are we gonna eat for dinner?!" Kuroo yells back, slamming the fridge door angrily in frustration. "All we have in there is a half-filled bottle of mayonnaise and a six pack."

Kenma shrugs aloofly, as if he really didn't care. Well, he often gets so engrossed with his games that he doesn't get hungry, or at least doesn't notice it. Kuroo sighs, and runs a hand through his hair.

"Well, it can't be helped. I guess I'll have to call (f/n) and see if we can have dinner with her." Kuroo says as he pulls out his phone and starts scrolling through his contacts. Kuroo had been trying not to wear out their welcome with her, but even as he tried to look serious he was clearly grinning.

"We can't." Kenma says bluntly. "She's working tonight."

"â€|Fuck! You're right." Kuroo makes an annoyed grunt. He glares at his phone as he stuffs it back into his pocket. He sighs angrily, crossing his arms over his chest. "Shit. I can't believe she's stuck working in that place so late."

"She says she likes her bossâ€|and she gets a lot of free foodâ€|" Kenma points out. However, Kuroo notes how Kenma's expression subtly changes. He's irritated. Like Kuroo, Kenma dislikes the time she spends workingâ€|especially if it meant she could be spending time with them.

"Still, a grocery storeâ€|and it's expensive too, so we can't even go visit her on the pretense that we're shopping thereâ€|" Kuroo mutters, scowling.

"â€|Why do we have to go on a pretense?" Kenma asks, looking back up at Kuroo and tilting his head curiously.

"Ahâ€|sorry, sometimes I forget how little experience you have with girlsâ€|" Kuroo closes his eyes, nodding sympathetically. He opens his arms, as if he's about to bestow some important wisdom. "Well you see Kenmaâ€|" "

"Nevermind." Kenma snaps back irritably, glaring at him for a few moments before whipping his head away from Kuroo and returning to his game. Now his expression is really annoyed.

Kuroo chuckles good-naturedly, before grabbing a flyer from the counter. "Let's just get pizza." Kuroo suggests, waiting for Kenma's grudging nod of approval before he starts dialing.

"Oi, Kenmaâ€|while I'm ordering, why don't you set up the system your parents sent? They also packed games with it, right?" Kuroo calls

out, the phone pressed to his ear as he listens to it ring. The moment he finishes speaking a polite voice speaks up from it, and Kuroo quickly starts placing his order.

"â€|Mmm." Kenma nods, saving his game and putting it away. He gets to his knees and shuffles forward on them to an opened package in front of the television. Kenma slowly starts pulling out the bulky system, and the equally bulky game cartridges his parents had sent with it. He had set it up so many times as a child, switching its' location between his house and Kuroo's, it was practically second nature. By the time Kuroo stepped into the living room area, announcing the pizza would be here in half an hour, everything was all ready for them to play.

Kenma gets to his feet, dusting off his knees before moving toward the couch. He sits down on it and silently hands Kuroo a controller.

"Wowâ€|this brings back memories, huh?" Kuroo laughs boisterously, as he plays with the buttons on the controller, familiarizing himself with the controls again. "I still remember when your parents bought this for you. You didn't say anything, but you were so excited. They had barely left the room before you installed the whole thing and stuck a controller in my hand."

"â€|I wanted to play something other than volleyball sometimesâ€|" Kenma mutters. But a small smile graces his face. It's a memory he cherishes as well.

"Ha! You just wanted to beat me at a game for once." Kuroo teases him, pushing his shoulder into Kenma's playfully.

"â€|Maybeâ€|a littleâ€|" Kenma admits, his smile growing a bit bigger as he looks down at the controller in his hand.

"Which game is this again?" Kuroo asks, now looking up at the screen. A familiar logo greets him, and he groans out loud, putting his face in his free hand.

"â€|I like this gameâ€|" Kenma says, puffing his cheeks out indignantly at Kuroo's reaction.

"That's because you always win." Kuroo snorts. "Since, you know, you've played every PokÃ©mon game in existence."

Kenma shrugs, but his expression, almost as blank as usual, holds a small trace of conceit. Kuroo can't help but laugh, enjoying his friend's self-assuredness, and they start to play.

As always happens with anything involving a game, Kenma is amazing. His sharp mind and incredible knowledge of the game means he actually uses planning and strategy, whereas Kuroo's preferred method is a mix between 'button-mashing' and 'what looks coolest'.

"Really? I have a Flying type, and you're going to use Bug?" Kenma exhales loudly in exasperation, looking at Kuroo dolefully. Kuroo sticks his tongue out at him, but he can't help but grinning. This game always brought out an interesting side of Kenma, so Kuroo was happy to playâ€|even if it meant constant losing.

Too soon, the doorbell rings. Kuroo immediately jumps up to answer it, while Kenma stares at it hopefully.

There's a tense moment of awkward silence, as they both realise who they had hoped was at the door.

"Thatâ€|must be the pizza." Kuroo says. He tries to sound normal, but the falter in his voice reveals how embarrassed he feels.

Kenma responds with a small nod, slowly looking back to the game to pauses it while Kuroo opens the door and pays for the pizza.

"Dig in." Kuroo says, walking back and throwing the pizza box on the small coffee table sitting between them and the T.V.

"â€|Shouldn't we get plates?" Kenma inquires, raising a brow as Kuroo opens the box and immediately grabs a slice.

"You want to wash 'em?" Kuroo replies, smirking. Kenma looks at him with his perturbed 'that would be a hassle' expression, and Kuroo nearly chokes on his bite of pizza laughing as Kenma quickly picks up a slice in his own hands.

For a while, they just enjoy their meal in comfortable silence. Today had been an especially grueling day of practice, and the smell of the delicious pizza had made them almost ravenous. Even Kenma was eating a fair amount. After they both polished off the majority of the pizza, Kuroo finally spoke up.

"I'm kind of glad she's working tonight. Don't get me wrong, I love spending time with herâ€|a lotâ€|but it's nice to just hang out with my best friend." Kuroo grins, throwing his arm around Kenma's shoulders and squeezing them affectionately. Kenma rolls his eyes, but he doesn't push Kuroo away. Physical contact usually made him uncomfortable, butâ€|well, whether Kenma tolerated it for Kuroo's sake or he liked the physical contact if it was him, Kenma didn't mind Kuroo's occasional hug. Stillâ€|

"â€|Why does all the stuff you say regarding meâ€|have to be so embarrassingâ€|" Kenma mutters huffily, although it's obvious he's happy. Kuroo chuckles, as he pulls his arm back and leans back against the couch.

"â€|It is nice." Kenma finally admits, smiling slightly again, before he picks up another slice of pizza and quickly bites into it so he has an excuse not to speak further.

Kuroo smiles, and picks up another slice of pizza for himself. They eat some more, nearly at the end of the pizza. Kuroo is debating whether he should save a slice for lunch tomorrow, when this time Kenma speaks up.

"â€|Kurooâ€|when you're aloneâ€|with herâ€|what do you two do?"

## 7. Afterschool Special - Part Two

\_Author's Note: Thank you to everyone on Tumblr who sent in suggestions to include for this chapter! This is the second part 3 Some very mild NSFW content below.\_

"Kuroo when you're alone with her what do you two do?"

Kenma's voice is soft and low. It's so emotionless one could almost believe the question means nothing to him. Just a passing thought he decided to voice.

Of course, Kuroo knows better. Even though Kenma was staring at his lap, his head tilted down, letting his hair cover his face so Kuroo couldn't see his expression Kuroo knows.

"We talk. I tease her, and then she starts blushing and stammering and looking extra cute, and we get close, since her body's so comfortable and that's all." Kuroo smiles pleasantly. His answer is shallow and trite and not even close to all he wants to say, and they both know it.

"What do you guys do when you're alone together? I bet it's pretty similar to what we do." Kuroo continues, flicking his hand dismissively. Kenma is silent for a few moments, thinking carefully before he finally opens his mouth.

"We play games. We do homework. We talk." Kenma answers simply. Kuroo's in such a rush to reply, to get off this topic, he doesn't notice the subtle changes in Kenma's tone. Changes that imply something more.

"See? That"

"She likes me." Kenma interrupts him. It's so smooth too, one might wonder if he even heard Kuroo at all.

There's a short pause, and Kuroo slowly closes his mouth.

"She listens to everything I say. She values everything I say." Kenma whispers softly. "She looks at my face a lot. When I'm happy, even if I try to hide it, she knows. And it makes her happy."

Kenma's eyes looks up, his gaze fixed on Kuroo. But now Kuroo is staring away from him, at the ceiling, with a sombre expression on his face. Kenma's gaze darts back down, and he continues.

"I know I don't have to worry about how she feels about me. If I'll do something that will make her not like me. I don't feel anxious or scared around her." Kenma looks down at his hands, squeezing them together tightly. "Being with her is really nice."

Another beat of awkward silence. This time, Kuroo knows he's not finished.

"If you want to tease her, that's fine but please don't scare her away." Kenma now raises his head and looks straight at Kuroo. Their eyes meet, but Kenma doesn't look away. "And and if you make her think your feelings for her are more than they are she'll be hurt. Really badly."

Kenma stops suddenly, and goes back to staring at his clenched hands, his teeth grit together tightly.

The unspoken words 'And then we'll both lose her' hang in the air.

More awkward silence.

"â€¦I get it." Kuroo sighs, as he leans back against the couch, tipping his head back. "I'll be more careful."

Kenma lets out a small exhale of relief. He knew Kuroo would listen to him and give his opinion some real thought, as he always did, but Kenma also hadn't been sure how Kuroo would react to the implication that he could hurt (f/n). Even if he didn't mean to.

"I like being around her too." Kuroo suddenly speaks up. "She's really honest about her feelings. That's why I like teasing herâ€¦I like how she shows everything, good or bad. And she has a great sense of humourâ€¦when we're together, I make her laugh. And she makes me laugh. And she really cares about us." Kuroo pauses, sighing as he runs a hand through his hair. "She really cares about \_you\_."

Kenma looks up at Kuroo, eyes wide in surprise. Kuroo tilts his head slightly so their eyes meet. Both of their expressions are unusually serious, and the air around them is suddenly tense.

And then Kenma breaks the sombre atmosphere with a sudden smile. It's smallâ€¦but bright.

"Sorryâ€¦I shouldn't have doubted you." Kenma apologises softly.

Kuroo returns his smile with a gentle one of his own. "Nah. You're right, I need to put her feelings first." Kuroo laughs, and puts his hand out. "Thanks, Kenma."

Kenma smiles gently as he high fives Kuroo's hand, as he has numerous times before. Kuroo grins, and then quickly grabs the last slice of pizza with his free hand.

"Screw saving the rest of this for lunch." Kuroo laughs.

"â€¦At least if we don't have enough food for lunch, she'll give us someâ€¦" Kenma sighs, as he leans back on the sofa, snuggling into it. His happy expression is suddenly gone. His eyes are half closed, and his mouth twists as if he's remembering something unpleasant.

"â€¦That wasn't your fault." Kenma murmurs suddenly.

"Pardon?" Kuroo asks in surprise. He looks down at the pizza, wondering if what he said had something to do with that. Well, usually Kenma didn't eat a lot, so Kuroo didn't think he'd even want the last sliceâ€¦

"Even if (f/n) didn't care about me, it wouldn't be your fault." Kenma murmurs. "â€¦Just like it wasn't your fault then."

Kuroo's eyes open wide. He tilts his head back slightly, and his expression immediately turns serious, and oddly pained, as he speaks.

"Let'sâ€¦not talk about that." Kuroo says, forcing himself to smile.

"â€¦Okayâ€¦I'm justâ€¦glad (f/n) is nothing like she was." Kenma murmurs softly.

"Yâ€¦Yeahâ€¦me tooâ€¦" Kuroo admits. He still looks a little uncomfortable, but Kenma notes that the mention of (f/n) seems to make him feel at least a little better.

"So, ready for another round?" Kuroo says, a bit more cheerfully as he picks up his controller.

Kenma shakes his head, and opens his mouth wide in a long, drawn-out yawn. "No thanksâ€¦I'm tired after all the foodâ€¦and practiceâ€¦" Kenma sighs pointedly, stretching out his limbs.

"Yeah yeahâ€¦I bet beating me just isn't as fun anymore." Kuroo sticks his tongue out at Kenma, who gives a small smirk with just a hint of a proud expression.

"Well, it's fine. I wanted someâ€¦personal time anyways." Kuroo says lasciviously, smirking as he stands up. He laughs as he sees Kenma's self-satisfied expression immediately disappear.

"Again?!" Kenma exclaims disbelievingly, his eyes narrowing as he glares at Kuroo. "â€¦How can you do 'that' every other day? It's weirdâ€¦"

"Okay first off, it's not 'that'. I know I had this talk with you already, so you know what it is." Kuroo starts, counting on his fingers. "Secondly, just because you're not interested in doing it \_at all\_ doesn't mean everyone else is the same, least of all me. Thirdly, I would do it when you're out of the apartment if you \_ever\_ left this apartment without me\_."

Kuroo smirks as he watches Kenma glare at him even harder. Kenma starts muttering something under his breath on how he's not \_completely\_ disinterested in it, it's just that Kuroo is ridiculous, when Kuroo continues.

"So now, if you'll excuse me, I have a date with two shy, beautiful girls who've decided they're tired of men and find love with each other." Kuroo sighs dreamily. "Beautiful story. As a true romantic, I'm sure I'll be crying from more place than one." Kuroo chuckles as Kenma's expression looks more and more unamused. "Don't worry, I'll wear headphones. These girls get loud on their quest for true love~"

Kenma put his head in his hand, rubbing his temples. "Just \_go\_." He growls through grit teeth. There's an air of 'I am 100% done with you' around him.

"Will do!" Kuroo says cheerfully, as he heads into the bedroom. Just as the door is about to close completely, Kuroo's head pops out.

"Oh yesâ€¦and \_she\_ \_does\_ not need to know when I do 'that'. So, please don't bring it up when she's around." Kuroo smiles sweetly, but his voice, and eyes, are completely serious. Kenma rolls his eyes

and nods, making a 'shooing away' motion with his hands, and Kuroo happily waves to him again before shutting the door behind him.

Kenma sighs tiredly, having quickly lost his desire to go into their \_shared\_ room and sleep.

"â€|I wonder if she wants to play PokÃ©mon after she finishes workingâ€|can't be any worse than him." He murmurs, sighing indignantlyâ€|but the sides of his mouth still twitch upwards in a soft smile.

## 8. Bonus Chapter: Touchy -- Part One

\_Author's Note: I decided to try writing a little something for Panthera while I had the time, as a thank you to all my wonderful followers and the awesome friends I've made in the last little while :) This is my first jealousy themed story, so please let me know what you think of it!\_

"Hey! (L/n)-chan! Hey, wait up!"

Having previously been staring straight down at the ground to protect your face from the brutally bitter cold winds, you suddenly look up as you hear someone calling your name. You turn around and, to your astonishment, you see a vaguely familiar man running towards you.

"Oh! Hello." You wave awkwardly as he skids to a stop in front of you. "Howâ€|How are you?"

The man chuckles enigmatically. "What are you getting so shy for? Anyone would think I made you nervous." He pats your shoulder affectionately, leaving his hand there as he leans down to look at you. "C'mon, you know me."

You laughed awkwardly, leaning away from him slightly. Well, he was sort of right. He shopped at your store quite a bit, and you'd been seeing him a lot lately while you were working. He had always been extremely friendly with you, and you'd always tried to return the favour butâ€|it was a bit difficult.

As much as you wanted to start making more friends, you quickly realised that not everyone was as easy to talk to as Kuroo and Kenma. Kuroo was used to making friends with shy people, having been Kenma's best friend for several years, and Kenma, even more introverted than yourself, was perfectly happy to sit in comfortable silence with you, neither of you feeling the need to say anything.

In fact, now that you thought about it, talking with them was almost effortless. You never worried about what to say to them.

So you might have been a little spoiled by them, especially considering how they had been the ones to really start your friendship. But you really did want to make some friends all on your own!

So then why was it always so hard to think of things to say when this man spoke to you? Why were you never comfortable around him?



"Sorry, you're right. It'sâ€|uh, the cold! I think it's slowing down my brain." You laugh nervously, running a hand through your hair to try and smooth it down (this dry wind wasn't being kind to it).

He laughs boisterously, and you breathe a sigh of relief. You're getting better at this, at least.

"Yeah, it's freezing. Perfect time to walk around snuggling with your boyfriend, huh?" He teases you, jostling your shoulder.

Oh great. Just like every other time someone makes a comment about your boyfriend, or lack thereof, you can already feel your cheeks heating up. It's obvious even with your face having been so red from the cold before, and you look away. "Wâ€|Well I don't have a boyfriend or anything like that, so I just make do with a jacket." You splutter, still not looking him in the eye.

"Eh? But what are you gonna do when it starts snowing? It'll be really cold then." He replies, sounding concerned. Abruptly, he throws his arm around you and gets uncomfortably close. You have to pull your head back to prevent your faces touching. You stare at him in surprise, and he's grinning. "You should really get on that, (l/n)-chan~"

"Hahaâ€|Yâ€|Yeah, I guess." You laugh nervously, knowing it sounds as forced as it was. This man liked to tease you tooâ€|but for some reason, it didn't make you laugh like Kuroo's teasing did. And you noticed that his eyes were fixed on you a lot, much like Kenma'sâ€|although Kenma's gaze never made you feel uneasy. It made you feelâ€|safe.

"(F/n)!"

You jump slightly as you hear your name called once again. This time, you don't even need to turn around to know who it is, as you'd recognise that voice anywhere.

"Kuroo! Kenma!" You cry out happily as your eyes light upon the two boys, waving at you from across the street. You turn to your friend, who's thankfully pulled his face back from yours, albeit slightly, taking a moment to tell him that these were your friends and neighbours, Kuroo Tetsurou and Kozume Kenma. You quickly turn back around, waving to the approaching boys (with a bit of difficulty, since his arm was heavy over your shoulders), and you smile brightlyâ€|

"Hmm?" A small, questioning sound escapes your lips.

â€|before you notice something's a bit off.

Even as they walk towards you, you can see that Kenma looks unusually annoyedâ€|no, more than that. You've seen him annoyed with Kuroo, and this is definitely different. The expression he's wearing now looks displeased, almostâ€|angry. He's frowning, and he seems to be glaring really sharply in your directionâ€|but not quite at you, since the moment his eyes move to meet yours, and he realises you're looking at him, he flicks his head away, still scowling as he walks forward.

And as you turn your attention to Kuroo, it's obvious that something is off with him too, although not quite as obviously. He has a friendly grin on as always, but something seemsâ€|stiff about it. Forced. As if he's clenching his jaw rather than smiling. And despite his 'smile', his eyes bear none of their usual warmth and mischievousness, and they seem to be fixed on your friend.

For a moment, you're confused. Did you miss one of their games? Did they have a bad day at practice? Orâ€|did you do something to make them mad at you?!

You're nervous worrying is quickly put to an end as they stop just in front of you. Just as you open your mouth to ask them what's wrong, Kenma suddenly outstretches his arm and grabs your right hand, quickly pulling it out of your pocket. You blink in surprise, since this is really the last thing you'd expect him to do, and he begins to tug on your hand gently, but persistently. And his large golden eyes are staring at you oddly seriously. You're still confused, but duck under the guy's arm to step closer to Kenma, who for some reason doesn't want to get too close. As his gaze flicks to your friend and then back to you, you wonder if maybe Kenma's a bit shy around him?

"What is it, Kenma?" You ask curiously. Once again, Kenma's eyes dart from you to your friend, and then, surprisingly, to Kuroo. You turn to look at Kuroo as well, but before you can Kenma tugs your hand once more. You turn back to him, and are surprised to see an unexpectedly determined expression on his face, staring at you intensely. Suddenly he steps unbelievably close to you, leaning down just a bit to move his mouth close to your ear. For some reason, this causes your heart to beat unexpectedly fast, and while he's doing this you almost don't realise that his other hand is now holding yours too. If it wasn't for the fact that his slender fingers, unusually warm and slightly calloused, were entwining with your own, you might not have realised at all.

"(F/n)â€|" He whispers softly, his warm breath tickling your ear as his lips just barely brush the curve of your ear. If your face wasn't red before, it certainly is now. You hear him take a deep, ragged breath, and let it out slowly.

"Do you haveâ€|your new game with you? I want to play butâ€|I left mine at homeâ€|" He murmurs quietly into your ear.

You pull back slightly and turn to face him, eyes open wide in obvious disbelief. All that forâ€|your game system? Even more surprising, however, is his expression now.

Kenma's staring at the ground instead of you, and his cheeks are a bright red, rivalling yours. And although he was the one getting so unbelievably close to you, he looks even more nervous than you are. You tilt your head slightly, exceedingly confused, when you hear deep chuckling behind you.

"He's been going nuts without a game to play. Usually he never forgets his system butâ€|well, we had some trouble with breakfast, and after putting out the fire we had to run so we wouldn't be late for practice." Kuroo explains happily.

"Ohâ€|okay. Then yeah, sure, you can have the game." You nod, before

turning slightly to your new acquaintance. "Sorry, this will just me a moment." You smile apologetically, and the man just smiles and nods. Kenma tugs your hand gently again, making you take a step closer to him. You turn back to Kenma, puzzled again, and you're about to ask if there isn't something else he wants to ask, when something occurs to you. When did Kuroo get on the other side of you?

Just as you're wondering, Kuroo steps in the small distance left between you and your acquaintance and puts his arm around your shoulders, hugging you tightly to him as he smiles kindly down at you.

"By the way, \_I\_ forgot my jacket, so please let me borrow some body heat." Kuroo says sweetly, pressing his large body close to yours. "See? I'm cold." He continues, as he grabs your other hand and holds it gently in his. His hands are so big they completely cover yours. He looks a bit surprised, and you let out a snort of laughter as you realise your hands must be freezing compared to his 'cold' ones. He smirks, and he holds your hand a little tighter.

He doesn't feel so very cold to you. But you know that, while he puts off heat like a furnace, retaining it is another story. And in your distracted state, you had failed to notice that Kuroo really was only wearing a sweater. So you sigh, and push your body into his just slightly. His high body heat also means he's great at warming up other people, and as a cold wind seems to blow straight through you, you can't help but be grateful for the heat emanating off of him. Especially on your hands.

"Seriously, you guysâ€"-wait, what was that about putting out a fire?" You ask suddenly, looking up at Kuroo with a mixture of disbelief and stern reproach. He grins sheepishly, and you realise it's probably better not to ask.

"â€|Well, anyways, it's fine. I should have my game system in my jacket pocket, or the one in my sweater." You say.

"You wore both?" Kuroo asks teasingly. You pout, about to make a comment about how not everyone has huge muscle bound bodies which generate tons of heat (because wow is his body ridiculously hot, especially against yours, and wow that is something you should never say out loud and should probably stop thinking about as soon as possible), when you hear a soft voice speak up on your other side.

"(F/n) hates being coldâ€|" Kenma replies. He's also one to run pretty warm, since his many, many volleyball practices have left him pretty surprisingly muscular as well. And like you, he hates being cold, so he's bundled up in a heavy sweater and jacket as well.

"Ah, that's right, because she's small, like Kenma." Kuroo smirks, and you and Kenma glare at him, pouting, as you both resist the urge to tell him that they're not small, he's just ridiculously big. As tempting as it is, Kuroo \_is\_ a provocation expert, and getting into an argument with him is usually the last thing one should do, as it's usually what he wants you to do.

"A-Anyways, let me grab theâ€|" You stop suddenly, as you realise your hands are still warmly nestled in those of Kenma and Kuroo.

You're not particularly eager to separate from them, since in a contest between 'warm, strong hands' and 'losing-feeling-in-your-fingers cold', it's obvious which one winds out. But unless gain telekinetic abilities in the next few minutes you're going to need at least one of them to get your game.

"Ohâ€¦I needâ€¦my handsâ€¦" You mutter awkwardly. For a moment, no one does anything, and the awkwardness meter seems to be rising exponentially, when Kuroo and Kenma do something which sends it hurtling into the stratosphere.

All it takes is a quick glance between the two boys, and you feel one of Kenma's hand slowly let go of yours. As he does, Kuroo suddenly lets go of your hand. You pause a moment, wondering if Kenma will pull his other hand back so you can search both pockets at once, when instead you abruptly feel something in your jacket pocket. As you look to the side, you see Kuroo smiling innocently as his hand rifles around in your pocket.

Not a few seconds later, you feel another hand, you're guessing Kenma's, in your other pocket, also rifling around.

Well, at least your face is definitely warm now.

## 9. Bonus Chapter: Touchy -- Part Two

"Ahâ€¦not hereâ€¦maybe it is in your sweater?" Kuroo asks curiously, still smiling sweetly while he makes no motion whatsoever to pull his hand out of your jacket pocket.

"I have it." Kenma speaks up suddenly, and you feel him pulling your game system out of your pocket. He opens it one handed easily, having learned the skill during his 'play two games at one time' attempts. His other hand is still occupied with yours, as his slender fingers still tightly holds yours.

It's not really like Kenma to be soâ€¦well, touchy feely, but you know whenever he has a really tough day he depends on Kuroo and, more recently, you as well, for some comfort. He's also not one to ask for it out loud, but once you get to know him it's easy to see the signs.

"â€¦You should clean your pockets, (f/n). There's a lot of random stuff in there." Kenma mutters, already playing the game and looking none too inconvenienced having to do it one handed.

"Really? There's practically nothing in this pocket." Kuroo replies, rifling around in your pocket again.

"Well, I tend to keep all my stuff in my right pocket becauseâ€¦"-hey, wait a second! If there was nothing in that pocket why did you take so long searching it?" You scold Kuroo, who just grins sheepishlyâ€¦with his hand still in your jacket pocket. What the hell was he hoping to find?

"You're not gonna find candy or anything like that in there." You continue, trying to sound stern but barely resisting the urge to laugh. Getting mad at Kuroo is incredibly difficult, much less staying that way. "Anything sugary is eaten long before it can get to

my pocket."

"Pfft. Is that why (f/n) is so sweet? I guess she must eat a lot of really cute foods too~" Kuroo smirks, and you can't help but let out a burst of laughter, not even trying to hold it back, while Kenma visibly winces at the corniness.

"\_Seriously?! Wow, that's worse than usual. Do you have a book of these or something?" You ask, teasing him affectionately.

"I just have a natural talent." Kuroo says proudly. You laugh again, watching Kenma roll his eyes, as Kuroo finally takes his hand out of your pocket and now takes your again.

"Shit, your fingers are freezing!" Kuroo exclaims in surprise. "No wonder you wanted my hand out of your pocket so badly. Can you even feel my hand?!"

"Look, I'm not a walking furnace like you. And for the record yes, I can feel you writing on the palm of my hand. I don't know what half those words are, but knowing you I'm assuming they're dirty, since you seem to know every single one of those in existence." You chide him playfully, sticking your tongue out at him.

"Another one of his natural talents." Kenma pipes up, eyes still focused on his game.

"Pfft." You can't help but laugh out loud as Kuroo, while now drawing dirty pictures on your palm, sticks his tongue out at Kenma, who, without lifting his gaze once, pokes his tongue out right back out at Kuroo.

They truly are the best of friends with one another. The kind of friendship you'd like to

Friends|friendship|

Shit. Shit. Fuck fuck. Shit.

"Ah! Um, I'm so sorry, we kind of got distracted, sorry!" You laugh awkwardly, as you look towards your friend. He's staring at his phone, his fingers tapping on the screen rapidly as he seems to be sending a message to someone.

You wait a few moments, but even as his fingers stop typing, he doesn't look up, his fingers occasionally sliding and tapping over the screen.

"Um|so, this is|uh, Kozume and Kuroo. They live almost right next door to me, so|um, well, they're my friends and neighbours." You say nervously, as your friend continues to stare at his phone. Well, you can't really blame him.

You feel the hands holding yours suddenly grip you tighter, and you can even feel the taut muscles in Kuroo's arms flex.

"Oh! So|Kenma, Kuroo, this is|" You pause for a moment, looking to Kenma and Kuroo awkwardly, but both of them are completely silent, with their eyes fixed on this guy.

Shit. You were hoping someone would ask him his name. Or he'd introduce himself or something.

He'd told you his name once, the first time you'd met, and you were really terrible with names soâ€|you forgot.

And then were too nervous and embarrassed to admit you forgot and ask his name again.

You thought he would be mad if he heard you forgot his name, and wouldn't want to be friends. You thought it would be really \_awkward\_.

Well at the moment the awkward meter had gone through space, time, and an alternate universe where people communicated by sniffing each other's butts and everything was way simpler, just for good measure.

"He's a very dear customer at our store. He's always really friendly, and I happened to run into him hereâ€|" You say, trying to sound pleasant.

Dead silence.

"â€|So, I hope everyone gets along." You finish, trying not to sound as dejected as you feel. Thisâ€|has not gone well.

And then, a strong voice surprises you.

"Hey, Customer-san. It's rude not to give girls your full attention." Kuroo is smiling, and his tone sounds lighthearted, but his voice is deep and powerful. It brokers no disobedience.

The man looks up now, and he gives a friendly smileâ€|which doesn't quite reach his eyes.

"Sorry, I had some things to take care ofâ€|" He says coolly. "I'm a busy man."

"â€|If you spend all your time in a grocery store, how busy can you be?" Kenma replies coldly, tilting his head in mock confusion.

"Kenma!" You whisper loudly, looking at him. He's frowning, obviously annoyed, and his eyes are completely fixed on the man, watching him sharply.

"Kenma, now you're being rude?" Kuroo laughs. His voice is affectionate as he speaks to Kenma, before going back to the cold voice from before as he turns his attention back to the other man. "I'm sure Customer-san does a lot of interesting things. After all, he tries to look our age, but he's a lot older than we are, right?"

â€|Do Kenma and Kuroo know something about this man that you don't?

"â€|Hmph." The man says blankly. "As it is, I actually have to leave to do something else right now. I'm sorry, (f/n)-chan, but we'll have to talk again later."

"Ooo, first name huh? You're braveâ€|" Kuroo practically snarls under his breath, his arm tightening around you reflexively, and you stare at him in disbelief. Not that it matters, since by the time you turn back to your 'dear customer', the man is walking away.

"Ah! Um, okay! Sorry you had to leave so soon! I'll see you next time you're at the store!" You call out. You pull your hand out of Kuroo's to wave goodbye to the man, but he doesn't even look behind him.

As soon as he gets out of sight you exhale loudly, and run your hand through your hair.

"Well, that could have gone betterâ€|" You mutter.

"â€|Sorry." Kenma whispers softly and you look up at him in surprise.

"Weâ€|may have gone a little overboardâ€|" Kuroo coughs awkwardly, as he pulls his arm back and takes a step back from you. Kenma follows suit, as he slowly lets go of your hand, although he doesn't move any farther away. You try to ignore how you already miss the heat of their hands and bodies close to yours.

"â€|It's fine." You sigh. "He was obviously mad at me before you guys ever spoke to him. I was a jerkâ€|I really shouldn't have forgotten he was there."

You look down, obviously feeling guilty. Then, suddenly, you tilt your head back, looking at the dull, grey sky. "I really need to do a less shit job of making friends." You declare.

Kuroo snorts derisively and you look at him curiously. He's glaring at the area your friend was just standing, and you realise his disdain is not directed at you.

"Trust me, (f/n). That guy was not interested in being your \_friend\_." Kuroo growls bitterly. His expression is furious, like a feral cat whose territory has been invaded, but when he sees your puzzled face his ferocity slowly disappears. He chuckles, ruffling your hair affectionately and getting amused as you quickly try to smooth it down.

"You have to be careful with guys, you know? Especially when you're alone with them. You never know if they could be sex crazed perverts." Kuroo says, tugging a lock of your hair gently as he lectures you.

"Yes, they could be like Kuroo." Kenma nods agreeably.

"Hey! I'll have you know that I am a **\*\*true\*\*** romantic." Kuroo says, trying to sound offended and failing miserably since he's obviously trying to hide a grin. He leans in close, pushing back your hair slightly, and whispers in your ear: "Although you should be a little careful around me, kitten~"

You feel your face heat up immediately, and it gets even worse as he laughs right beside your ear and his warm breath washes over your ears, still sensitive from the cold. There's a brief pause, and thenâ€|

"You'd probably have more to fear from a real kitten." Kenma snorts.

You can't help but laugh, especially as Kuroo starts to complain about Kenma 'ruining his fierce image' and starts pawing at the game system to get the blonde boy's attention (which he responded to by pulling the game away and questioning Kuroo's mental age). Just like always, whenever you're feeling down, being around Kuroo and Kenma just makes everything feel betterâ€|or at least less terrible.

Still, you can't help but still feel a little badâ€|you're silent for a few moments, thinking, before you realise it's also quiet around you. You look up suddenly to see Kuroo gazing down at you sadly, and when you turn to Kenma he seems to be watching you with worried eyes as well. You force a smile, trying to get them to relax, and you jump slightly with surprise as you feel Kenma grab your hand again with both of his.

"Hey (f/n), youâ€|you have us you knowâ€|" Kenma murmurs awkwardly, but with a strong determination. You stand there, wide eyed with astonishment, obviously not having expected something like that from him.

"â€| (F/n)." Kuroo takes your other hand gently and catches your attention now, as you spin around to look at him. "Don't worry too much about making friends, ok? You're a good person; all you need is to meet the right people. I know some nice people I can introduce you toâ€|girls. Some nice girls." Kuroo adds quickly, smiling at you reassuringly

"Yeah, Kuroo knows a lot of girls." Kenma agrees, yawning. Practice and cold have started taking their toll, and he looks tired. "He spent most of his first year getting to know them."

"â€|Kenma, don't help." Kuroo sighs. Kenma pouts, looking a bit insulted, and pulls his hands back from yours to go back to his game (apparently not even the chance to warm his hands can tear him away from it). Kuroo pauses for a moment, and then suddenly turns his attention to you. "Heyâ€|you know, Kenma was rightâ€|"

"â€|About the girls?" You ask confusedly.

"Told you." Kenma adds.

"What? No, Iâ€|"Look, the girls I can introduce you to are girlfriends of my teammates." Kuroo takes a deep breath and runs a hand through his hair before starting again. "I meant what he said before. It's okay if you have some trouble getting close to new people or making friends. You'll always have us, so you don't have to worry about that."

"Oh! Ohâ€|thanks." You say, feeling your cheeks heat up a bit. You look away, wanting to express how happy their words made you but not being able to find the words. You'd been struck practically speechless.

Your friends, your real friends, seem to know though, since now that they know you're not upset they're happy to get back to teasing



you.

"Yeah, there's no way we'd let go of someone who gave us so much free food." Kuroo chuckles.

"And who's so good at video games?" Kenma adds, smiling gently.

You can't help but smile, and let out a small laugh. It was comforting, knowing that there was always someone there for you, no matter what. Well, in your case, two someones.

Just as you're thinking this, a cold wind once against passes through, and you shiver. Immediately, the boys move closer to you again.

"You need to get a better jacket." Kuroo scolds you.

"Big talk from a guy with none." You shoot back, wrinkling the bright red tip of your cold nose at him.

"You don't have any gloves either!" Kenma says, looking at you disapprovingly.

"I always lose them." You admit sheepishly. "Look, it's cold, let's head home. My boss sent me home yesterday with a huge tin of hot chocolate mix. And my family sent in some apple cider mix too."

You barely stop yourself from laughing when you see how excited they look. You can almost imagine ears perking up and tails wagging in eagerness, even from the usually subdued Kenma. They can still surprise you, in many, many ways, but in other ways, they never change.

"Alright, let's go~" Kuroo says happily, as he grabs your hand, and quickly starts walking in the direction of your home. Right, he and Kenma also forgot gloves.

His hand is warm and strong, and yet it holds yours gently and securely.

"C'mon, Kenma!" You smile, as you grab Kenma's hand as well. It's cold, bitterly so, and you wrap your hand around his fingers. He looks up at you in surprise, but stays silent as you gently pull him forwards. He quickly starts moving towards you, as you feel yourself tugged forward by Kuroo, and you start to laugh, giddy with joy.

Together, the three of you hurry home

even as a little part of you wishes that you could stay out here with them for much longer.

End  
file.